

Tsukuba, Japan - IP Bulletin 2014-15

Introduction

The IP Bulletin is the International Programs "catalog" and provides academic information about the program in Tsukuba, Japan.

General Information

The program in Japan is affiliated with the University of Tsukuba, which is a public institution founded in 1872. Ranked in the top 10 universities in Japan, the University of Tsukuba currently enrolls approximately 17,000 students (10,000 undergraduates and 7,000 graduate students), including about 1,700 international students from 82 countries/ regions.

The University is located in Tsukuba Science City, Ibaraki Prefecture, with 32 public research institutions and more than 100 private organizations, just 60 km (38 miles) and 45 minutes from downtown Tokyo, and 50 km (31 miles) from Narita International Airport. Offering a pleasant, safe and green environment for students, the main Tsukuba campus covers an area of 258 hectares (636 acres), making it one of the largest single campus in Japan.

The University of Tsukuba has 25 colleges in 9 schools. It offers 39 master's degree programs and 47 doctoral degree programs, including a medical degree. With 2,400 teaching and research staff, the University has a low faculty/student ratio of 1 to 7.

A forerunner of the university, Tokyo University of Education, was founded 130 years ago as one of the oldest universities in Japan. The current university was established in 1973. As one of the leading research institutions in Japan, three Nobel laureates, two in physics and one in chemistry, are associated with the University of Tsukuba. Tsukuba is particularly noted for its research and teaching in the fields of physics, cybernetics, nanotechnology, biological sciences, medicine, physical education, humanities, and social sciences.

Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has been promoting the "Global 30" Project for Establishing Core Universities for Internationalization. The University of Tsukuba has been actively participating in this project since the Fall of 2011 by offering undergraduate degree programs in Biological Sciences, Geosciences, Life and Environmental Sciences, Agro-Biological Resources Sciences, Social Sciences, International Studies, and Medical Sciences, which are entirely in English.

In 2011, the CSU Office of the International Programs (OIP) established an academic exchange agreement with the University of Tsukuba for the purpose of exchanging students. CSU students who are selected to study at the University of Tsukuba attend as exchange students and are "Junior Year at Tsukuba Program" (JTP) participants although students can be either juniors or seniors during their year at Tsukuba. Approximately 100 students per year from a wide range of countries take advantage of studying in Japan in the JTP program, taking the Japanese language and culture training program which is regarded as a leading program in Japan. JTP students are also required to take two courses taught in English during year from a list of over 200 courses from diverse disciplines such as international studies, economics, biology, geosciences, and engineering. Advanced students are encouraged to take regular courses with Japanese students. CSU students have numerous opportunities to interact with Japanese students while taking non-language courses, living in the dormitories, and through university clubs.

Information on the University of Tsukuba can be found on the web at <http://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/english/about/index.html> and <http://www.global.tsukuba.ac.jp/>.

Academic Calendar

The semester dates for 2014-15 are as follows:

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
Semester 1: Fall	October 1	February 12
Semester 2: Spring	April 10	August 5

(Note: In April 2013, the University of Tsukuba changed its academic year structure from a trimester system to a semester system.)

Each semester is further subdivided into three 5-week sessions called “modules” which run sequentially:

<u>Semester 1</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
Module A	October 1	November 5
Module B	November 6	December 10
Module C	December 11	February 12
<u>Semester 2</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
Module A	April 10	May 15
Module B	May 16	June 20
Module C	June 21	August 5

Academic Culture

The International Student Center offers advice and counseling to international students to make their studies at the University and their stay in Japan productive and enjoyable. Upon arrival at the University of Tsukuba, all exchange students must attend an orientation program organized by the International Student Center. It is designed to help students settle into life on campus and in Japan as smoothly as possible.

The University of Tsukuba will assign a faculty member to each JTP student as his/her academic advisor. Advisors will provide students with advice regarding their major fields. In addition, a tutor will also be appointed to each JTP student. The tutors can assist with various administrative procedures, language study, and course work. For information on international student support, please refer to the International Student Center site at: <http://www.intersc.tsukuba.ac.jp/>.

Traditionally, there is not much interaction between professors and undergraduate students at Japanese universities, either inside or outside the classroom, until their senior year, at which point they start taking senior thesis seminar with their thesis advisor. The faculty member and the seminar students usually form close relationship. However, at the University of Tsukuba, which was re-established in 1973 on a new concept of “Open University” to meet the needs of the next generation in a brand new City of Science, professors are inspiring and nurturing, and fellow students are friendly and supportive.

Assessment and Grading

The grading at the University of Tsukuba is based on the following system, which directly converts the result of student’s accomplishments in the course to a letter grade. Tsukuba does not grant an academic credit for the D grade, which is the equivalent of an F grade at CSU.

Student’s Raw Score in the Course	Tsukuba Grade Issued	CSU Grade Equivalent
90-100%	A+	A
80-89%	A	A
70-79%	B	B
60-69%	C	C
59% and below	D (No credits granted)	F

Note that the highest grade that is reported to a CSU campus is an A.

All courses attempted during the year will be reported to the student’s home campus after the year abroad has concluded including uncompleted courses, failed courses and courses which have been dropped without OIP authorization. Note that if courses are not completed by the end of the calendar year, a grade of “WU” will be assigned which is equivalent to an “F” grade for grade point average calculation purposes.

Academic reports can take up to four months to process after the academic year has concluded, and sometimes longer depending on circumstances. Since the academic year does not conclude until August the following year, academic reports may not be available until December or January. Students must take in this consideration, particularly students who are attempting to graduate upon their return to California.

Class attendance is mandatory, and absences and tardiness are considered in determining grades. The attendance policy is very rigid and too many absences may result in a failing grade.

Academic Reporting

In addition to units and grades, the OIP reports each course a CSU student attempted to his/her home campus with the title of the course taken at Tsukuba and the CSU home campus department to which the course is closely related. If students wish to apply the credits towards specific major, minor, or general education requirements, they will need to furnish their advisors with course descriptions, syllabi, and other course materials. Students should expect to complete campus-based forms (petitions or course substitution requests) with the assistance of their advisor(s). If courses are not needed for specific degree requirements, then it is usually not necessary to complete any other forms.

The Academic Program at the University of Tsukuba

The students who are selected to study at the University of Tsukuba focus their studies on Japanese language and culture courses, supplemented by at least two courses taught in English during the year which can be in any subject area based on availability and prerequisites.

Courseload

CSU IP students are required to enroll in a minimum equivalent of 15 units EACH semester.

Unit Conversion Guidelines

For every credit earned at the University of Tsukuba, an IP student earns one CSU semester unit. To convert the value of CSU semester units into CSU quarter units, multiply the CSU semester units by 1.5.

Japanese Language Courses

Japanese language courses are provided at the International Student Center. Students are placed at an appropriate level based on their performance on a placement or level assessment test. This level is based on the student's ability to perform in Japanese, and their communication skills. It does not, therefore, necessarily correspond to the number of hours or years students may have studied prior to coming to Japan.

The Japanese language courses are organized as follows:

1. Intensive and semi-intensive Japanese courses,
2. Kanji courses for beginners, elementary, and intermediate levels, and
3. Skill-based classes in listening, speaking, reading and writing for intermediate and advanced levels.

Japanese language courses are generally 15 week courses and therefore considered a "three module course" which spans across the entire semester. Lower level courses will meet four or five times per week while more advanced courses may meet less per week.

Courses on Japan-Related Subjects

Courses on Japan-related subjects are established for international students or returnee students who have attended secondary education in a foreign country for a considerable period of time. The lectures are given in Japanese. In order to enroll in these lectures, you need to possess a Japanese proficiency level of J800 or above in the courses offered at the University's International Student Center.

Courses Taught in English

CSU students are required to enroll in at least two courses taught in English during the year which can be in any subject area based on availability and prerequisites. Student may select courses for JTP students or courses offered through the "Global 30" Programs.

Course Information

For information about the Japanese language courses, go to:

<<http://www.intersc.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/isc-activities/japanese-language-section/>>.

For information on all courses available to exchange students or JTP students including Japanese language, courses, courses on Japan-related subjects, and G30 courses, access the "JTP Course Guide 2014-15" at <<http://www.intersc.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/academic-life/exchange-programs>>. If the JTP Course Guide for 2014-15 is not yet available, click on the JTP Course Guide for 2013-14 (PDF document) to get an idea of the courses offered and keep checking the university website periodically for updates.

For questions on courses, please contact the Division of International Students at <isc-short-term@un.tsukuba.ac.jp>.